

Natural Resources Review

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KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT FOR NATURAL RESOURCES

OUR MISSION: To improve the quality of life for all Kentuckians by protecting our land, air, and water resources; utilizing our natural resources in an environmentally conscientious manner; and creating efficient environmentally responsible ways of managing, conserving and sustaining our resources for future generations.



Photo: Evan Satterwhite
Division of Forestry
Tree Nursery Damage
Morgan County Ky



Commissioner's Corner

**By Steve Hohmann, Commissioner
Department for Natural Resources**

Colleagues,

In this issue of the Natural Resources Review, I want to recognize and thank the dedicated department employees who quickly rallied to assist in recovery and cleanup efforts after the March 2 tornado devastated large areas of eastern Kentucky. While we were fortunate not to have any loss of life by our staff, we recognize the tragic circumstances of many of our fellow citizens and extend to them our sympathies and best wishes as they confront a significant challenge. Within the department, the Division of Forestry (DOF) suffered a tremendous blow when the Morgan County Nursery (MCN) and Eastern Area Office (EAO) were destroyed by the same tornado that hit West Liberty. Thankfully, none of the nine employees who work at the MCN and EAO were at the facility at the time of the storm. The EAO housed DOF's federal excess vehicles and equipment, which are distributed to rural fire departments. It was also used to store wildfire tools, vehicles and equipment not yet assigned to district offices. Most of these vehicles, tools and equipment were destroyed. Six buildings were declared a total loss by the state risk adjustor and two are a partial loss. Fortunately, the division does a great job of keeping their insurance and inventories up to date, which will allow us to recoup much of the cost of replacing the buildings and material. There is no insurance for the state-owned vehicles.

Our Heritage Land Conservation Fund (HLCF) program also took a major loss when their property surrounding Broke Leg Falls in Menifee County was leveled by a tornado. After a thorough assessment by HLCF staff, it was determined that this beautiful site cannot be restored to its original beauty, but the program will erect signs that explain the immense damage created by nature and visitors will be able to observe the site as it is restored naturally.

The pictures included in this volume tell the story of not only the devastation wrought by the powerful storm, but of the leadership, dedication, skill, and fortitude of those employees who responded quickly and effectively to this dire situation. I am very proud of their response to this emergency and commend them for their actions. They serve as an outstanding example for all of us who may be confronted with unexpected conditions that severely test our resolve and capabilities.

Kentucky's Division of Forestry Hit with Devastating Blow
Morgan County Nursery Devastated by Tornado
March 2, 2012



Entrance to the Morgan County nursery and southeast district after the twister came through.



Debris and downed power lines littered the area.



A day after the devastating tornado, approximately 5 inches of snow was dumped on the area, complicating the cleanup. However, seedlings that had been in a refrigerated building and rented refrigerated truck were preserved by the snowfall and 80 + percent of them were salvaged. A seedling bag was found about 100 miles away in West Virginia after the storm. In the photos above and on the following pages, observe the destruction of the buildings and gorgeous landscape.

The Morgan County Nursery annually produces 1.8 to 2.2 million tree seedlings per year with a variety of 52 native species.



Buildings and equipment were tossed about effortlessly by the twister spinning at a speed of 140 miles an hour and traveling across the ground at 60 miles per hour. The width of its path was estimated at one half to one mile wide. Thankfully, the nine employees were not present at the time the tornado swept through.



Large trees were uprooted and tossed about, along with anything in the tornado's path. A large propane tank from a nearby home landed on the property of the Morgan County Nursery. The tornado hit the Woodsbend area before its path led to the town of West Liberty. The loss of property and the damage to the land pale in comparison to the five fatalities occurring in the immediate vicinity of the nursery.





Only the anchor bolts remain in the foundation of this building.



Hundreds of small items could not be found after the storm.



Piles of rubble don't even resemble the place where employees reported for duty on a daily basis.



The Federal Excess Property Office provided service to volunteer fire departments statewide.



Trees in the path of the twister were laid in every direction.



Over 20 employees from various districts sift through the seedlings.



A path was cleared and workers were brought in to begin the cleanup. This was once a stand of beautiful white pine trees.



A command center was quickly set up in one of only two remaining buildings.



Food, water and necessary supplies were brought in to the center.



Eric Gracey makes a list of needed supplies and prioritizes the list of work to be accomplished.



Food items were donated for the workers.



Items found were secured in "PODS" to prevent looting.



Restoring the electricity was top priority for the utility companies. Debris litters the land in the area of Morgan County.



Tim Sheehan (above right) was designated in charge of the recovery project and tasked with supervising the men and women and safely working through the cleanup and assessment of the damage.

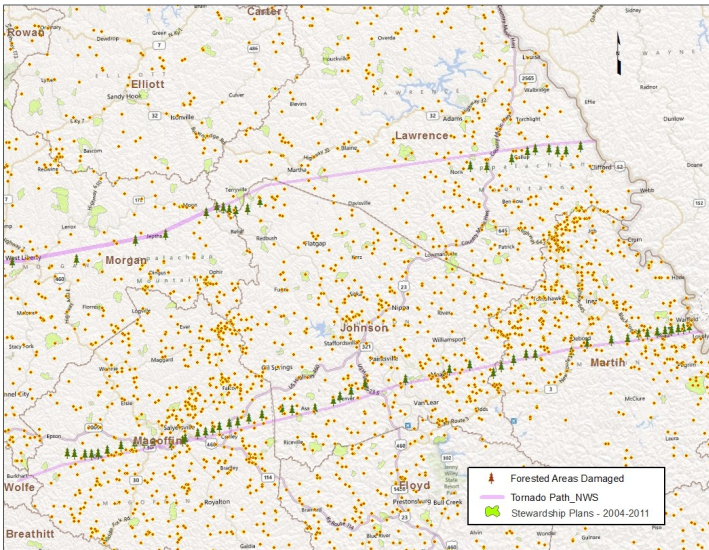




Equipment used in growing the seedlings was damaged and broken and will be of limited use in future operations.



Remains of an equipment storage shed on the property.



This map shows the path of the storm overlaid with coordinates of down timber caused by the storm and the coordinates of wildfires in these counties from 2000 to the present. These counties are consistently Kentucky Division of Forestry's heaviest wildfire counties. There is an elevated fire danger the next few years due to the down timber in these counties.



Softball-sized hail accompanied the high winds and devastation of the March 2nd, storm.

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CHIA Update Given to Cabinet Secretary

Peters gives positive feedback on the progress made



On Jan. 24, 2012 Cabinet Secretary Leonard Peters visited the DNR and met with newly appointed Commissioner Steve Hohmann, representatives of the mining divisions and senior staff in charge of the CHIA program. A presentation was provided that shows the progress of the CHIA trend stations and future plans. Division of Mine Reclamation and Enforcement inspectors conducted all of the water sampling and Department of Environmental Services labs did the water testing. The group presented an updated review of the data to representatives of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Surface Mining, Corps of Engineers, and Fish and Wildlife on March 21.



At a recent staff meeting, Hank List, former Deputy Cabinet Secretary, was presented a certificate and a cutting board made from Kentucky hardwood. "Hank has been a huge supporter of the work that we do and a huge advocate of the programs that we run on behalf of the Commonwealth," said Commissioner Steve Hohmann.

Office of Mine Safety and Licensing gets new Executive Director

Freddie Lewis assumes responsibility over agency licensing and inspecting underground mines

A longtime inspector was appointed March 1, 2012 as executive director of the Kentucky Office of Mine Safety and Licensing, the state agency charged with enforcing laws that keep coal miners safe. Freddie Lewis previously worked for nine years in the agency's Pikeville regional office as a mine safety analyst, mine inspector, mine rescue team member and an instructor. He most recently served as manager of safety and training for Alliance Coal Co.

"Mine safety is a top priority in this cabinet, and I have every confidence that Freddie Lewis will help us focus on making sure our miners go to work each day with the knowledge that we value their health and welfare," said Len Peters, Energy and Environment Cabinet Secretary. "His background in mine safety will, I believe, ensure we accomplish that goal."



The Office of Mine Safety and Licensing, with 174 authorized employees, is charged with providing a safe working environment for coal miners, as well as training those miners to work safely. The agency's inspectors enforce laws and regulations relating to workplace safety.

Division of Abandoned Mine Lands Gets New Director

Robert Scott returns to AML as agency leader

On March 16, 2012, Energy and Environment Cabinet Secretary Len Peters named Robert F. Scott as the new director of the Division of Abandoned Mine Lands (AML). Scott, a civil engineer, most recently created mine and waterline designs for a Lexington engineering firm. Prior to that position, he worked for more than 26 years at AML as a design engineer, a design branch manager and served as the assistant director.

AML is authorized under Kentucky law (KRS.350) to abate hazards to public health, safety, and the environment caused by mining that occurred prior to 1982. The abandoned mine land program is a 100-percent federally funded, state-implemented program. In addition to expending funds to reclaim safety hazards posed by past mining, AML has expended more than \$94.3 million for waterline improvements providing more than 13,400 households with a potable water supply in 24 coalfield counties in eastern, southern and western Kentucky.



85 acres of coal slurry and refuse in Hopkins County to be reclaimed

Project led by Kentucky Division of Abandoned Mine Lands set to begin this fall

By Corey Ann Howard and Shannon Train

Eighty-five acres of barren, unproductive wasteland consisting of coal slurry and refuse in Hopkins County paint the landscape of Kentucky coal mining's ugly past. This fall, the Kentucky Division of Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) will spearhead a massive reclamation effort to revitalize the negatively impacted area situated adjacent to Lamb's Creek, a tributary of Clear Creek.



The project, named the Colonial Slurry Abandoned Mine Lands Reclamation Project, will divide the site into five reclamation areas, six borrow areas, and eight access roads. Area A is an approximately 1.5-acre slurry pit in which the earthen material around the pit will be used to cover the slurry and re-vegetate the area. Area B consists of 10.5 acres of coarse refuse material. This area will be covered with earthen material and any acid-forming materials, which currently degrade the waters of Lamb's Creek, will be buried in Area C. Forty-two acres of slurry impoundment comprise Area C. Project plans call for AML to create a wetland in the center of the impoundment by covering the slurry with earthen material and wood-chips. This newly created wetland will serve as passive treatment for the acid-forming materials and will, over time, establish an environment attracting aquatic life to the area.

Additionally, Area D of the project consists of a 26-acre slurry pit that partially floods at various times and causes highly acidic water to seep into an existing wetland. AML will excavate a trench and then backfill the trench with limestone rock to allow subsurface water to leave the site via a less acidic source, and ultimately result in a more neutral pH measurement. Portions of Area D not covered in rock will be covered with earthen material. The final project area, Area E, consists of 2.5 acres of slurry pit and AML will create a central limestone channel across the existing pit and then cover the area with earthen material. All borrow areas will be regraded into stable slopes and the landscape returned to its approximate original contour. All access roads will be improved by replacing the existing dirt with gravel.

"Completion of the project will have a tremendous positive effect on both the water quality and sediment loads of Lambs Creek and Clear Creek. This project will also provide construction jobs for several months to Hopkins County while cleaning up hazards to the public," said AML Assistant Director Mark A. Meade.



The Division of Forestry encounters many surprises while fighting wildfires in Kentucky. This is one such surprise.

This photo was taken at Hopkins County Fire #9002 off of Williams Mine Rd. on March 7, 2012. No one knows exactly what this tank contained because the only markings on it are what you can see in the photo. The fire was across the street from Donovan Commercial Industries, which is a company that makes and tests explosives for use by coal companies.

There was quite a bit of debris and a few abandoned vehicles along the road side that had to be raked and cleared before setting a back burn.

Division of Conservation Honored as Kentucky Proud Partner in Excellence

Agriculture Commissioner James Comer has presented the Kentucky Division of Conservation with a *Kentucky Proud Partner in Excellence Award*.

“The Division of Conservation plays an important role in preserving Kentucky’s natural resources for future generations,” Commissioner Comer said. “Division Director Steven A. Coleman is recognized throughout the Commonwealth as a leader in Kentucky agriculture. I am pleased to honor Coleman and the Division of Conservation with this award.”

The Kentucky Proud Partner in Excellence Awards were presented to Kentucky Proud member businesses, organizations, and government agencies for their service to Kentucky agriculture. The awards were issued during the boys and girls state basketball tournaments in March.



Division of Oil and Gas Inspectors in Full Swing of Inspections and Plugging Season



(Left) Inspector Doug Hamilton inspects an active oil pumpjack as Marvin Smith (right, holding briefcase) meets with a rig crew in Powell county to ensure a complete and thorough job.

Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund Property Damaged by Tornado

Tornado hits preserved land/county park "Broke Leg Falls" managed by Menifee County

The gorgeous 11-acre Broke Leg Falls property in Menifee County is captured in the "Before and After" pictures below. The property was named one of the top five beautiful places in Kentucky, and the tornado of March 2, 2012 had a devastating effect on the park. The county will reopen the trails as soon as safely possible. Since it is a natural and protected area, very little will be done to the down trees and the forested areas will be allowed to revegetate naturally, although invasive species control will be necessary. FEMA funding is under application for restoration of the structures.



Park entrance-before



Parking lot-after the storm



A newly constructed trail



Post storm photo shows the same area



Picnic shelter before and after the storm.



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Photo by
J. Hamon